

Newspaper Clippings

Cops to Protect Feeders

TIMES CITY

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI
THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009

HC asks cops to protect those who feed stray dogs

Smriti Singh | 10A

New Delhi: The next time you think of feeding stray dogs in your locality, take care. Some irate residents have now taken upon themselves to assault and abuse neighbours who feed stray canines.

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday came across seven such complaints, including one filed by a lawyer, from different parts of the capital. They all sought protection from neighbours who allegedly abused and assaulted them.

Coming to the rescue of the complainants, Justice Rajiv Shrivastava directed the

police to ensure the safety of the women who had taken up the task of tending to stray dogs. The HC also directed the SHO of the concerned areas to "act upon the complaints".

Filing a petition through counsel Kamran Singh, petitioner Namrata Chanda sought a direction for security to her as some of her neighbours had allegedly assaulted her for feeding dogs.

She claimed that being an animal rights activist, she also regularly ensured vaccination and sterilization of stray dogs as per the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

The petitioner brought to



FED UP? This act of kindness has apparently angered many

the court's notice that the ministry of personnel, public grievances and pension commission had issued circulars clearly indicating that tending to community animals must not be objected to.

Justice Rajiv Shrivastava directed the SHO of Freedom Fighters colony in Kalkaji area of South Delhi to protect Chanda.

The high court, which is also hearing the main petition filed by NGO Citizens for the Welfare and Protection of Animals on the issue, delivered a verbal order just a week after disposing of a similar petition in which protection was sought. The court on August 4 was then

assured by the additional standing counsel of the government that the safety of petitioner Jasmine Dandekar, a practising lawyer, would be ensured and the complaint would be passed on to the SHO for "appropriate action".

Talking about the incident, Jasmine said, "Many dog loving citizens have come forward to file their complaints as we face resentment from every quarter for feeding dogs. Even the NGO Friends has filed a petition before the court. We don't want people with such mentality to hamper our task."

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पुलिस वाले, आवारा कुत्तों के रखवाले हाईकोर्ट का आदेश, डॉग लवर्स की सुरक्षा भी सुनिश्चित करे पुलिस

नई दिल्ली, राज्य ब्यूरो : राष्ट्रीय राजधानी में आवारा कुत्तों की हिफाजत का जिम्मा अब दिल्ली पुलिस निभाएगी। साथ ही कुत्तों को खाना खिलाने वाले डॉग लवर्स (रवान प्रेमियों) की सुरक्षा भी पुलिस ही सुनिश्चित करेगी। हाईकोर्ट ने एक अलग निर्देश में न केवल सड़क पर भूखे मरने वाले आवारा कुत्तों की सुरक्षा व्यवस्था की है, बल्कि उनके चालनहारों को भी हजमत बखशी है।

जीस्टस बी.के.शाली ने पशु कल्याण बोर्ड को निर्देशित किया है कि आरक्षक, स्थानीय एएसएओ और एनबीओ की मदद से प्रत्येक जगह में एक ऐसी जगह तलाशें, जहां आवारा कुत्तों को खाना खिलाया जा सके। मामले की स्टेटस रिपोर्ट चार हफ्ते में देने का हुक्म भी दिया गया है। उन्होंने कहा है कि एक बार क्षेत्र में स्थान नियत हो जाने के बाद डॉग लवर्स वहां आ-जा सकते हैं और आवारा



- हर जगह में एक स्थान हो, जहां आवारा कुत्तों को खाना खिला सके
- दिल्ली में आवारा कुत्तों की कुल संख्या : 2 लाख 62 हजार 740

कुत्तों को खाना खिला सकते हैं। पुलिस ऐसे स्थानों पर डॉग लवर्स की सुरक्षा उस समय तक सुनिश्चित

करे जब तक पशु कल्याण बोर्ड प्रत्येक जगह में स्थान विशेष का निर्धारण न करे। हाईकोर्ट में राजधानी के विभिन्न स्थानों से डॉग लवर्स की ओर से दायर की गई याचिकाओं में कहा गया था कि आवारा कुत्तों को खाना खिलाते समय हमला करने वाली और इस संबंध में प्रताड़ित करने वाले स्थानीय निवासियों से उनकी सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित कराई जाए। याचिकाकर्ता नम्रता चंदा की ओर से पेश हुई अधिवक्ता कंचन सिंह ने कहा कि कुत्तों को खाना खिलाते समय उनकी मुर्बकिल के कुछ पड़ोसियों ने उन पर हमला बोल दिया। इसी तरह एक अन्य याचिकाकर्ता एवं अधिवक्ता जैसमिन दासकेवाली ने बताया कि कुत्तों को प्यार करने वाले बहुत से लोगों की ओर से ये शिकायतें दर्ज कराई गई हैं कि जब भी आवारा कुत्तों को कुछ खिलाते-पिलाने की कोशिश करते हैं तो उन्हें विशेष डरेलना पड़ता है।

The Indian Express — dated: 19/12/09

(Delhi/Mum)

r/Nagpur/Pu

Ensure safety of stray canines, dog lovers: HC to govt, police

UTKARSHANAND
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 18

UPHOLDING the right of dog lovers and animal rights activists to get protection from intimidating neighbours, the Delhi High Court on Friday asked the Delhi government and police to locate sites in 11 police station areas where stray dogs could be fed without any hassles.

Justice VK Jain said feeding dogs is both lawful and helpful and assists the municipal animal birth control programme in which dogs are sterilised and vaccinated area-wise.

"Feeding dogs makes them friendly and easier to handle," the court held. "Citizens are free to feed dogs in areas to be mutually decided by the Animal Welfare Board of India and the feeder."

As per the court's directive, station house officers of 11 police stations — including Defence Colony, Vasant Kunj, Saket, Mehrauli, Geeta Colony, Kalkaji and Kamala Nagar — are required within two weeks to zero in on some sites in their localities where animal lovers could feed the strays without hindrance from abusive neighbours.

Delhi government's counsel Meera Bhatia told the court that the department would do the needful in coordination with the Animal Welfare Board at the earliest and let the court know about the developments in the next report.

In August, the court had received seven petitions, including the main petition filed by the NGO 'Citizens for the Welfare and Protection of Animals', that complained of "repeated and continuous intimidation, abuse and threats, physical assault by residents of locality with an intention to



Earlier HC order, laws for protection of stray animals

In its judgment in the Maneka Gandhi vs MCD/NDMC case in 1992, the High Court had held that street dogs were a part of the city and just being classified as strays did not mean they should be killed. The court had accepted that sterilisation and vaccination of dogs was the only scientific and humane solution of the so-called problem of street dogs.

Harassing, killing or subjecting any animal to pain and suffering is an offence under Section 11 of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and Sections 428 and 429 of the IPC. Punishment for these crimes includes a fine and imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

protects their "life and limb," the petitioners had also accused the police of "apathy" in acting on their complaints of harassment.

While the police had earlier claimed that they could do little, as it was essentially the civic body's (MCD) job, the petitioners had cited the Stray Animal Control Rules (Dogs), 2001, meant to protect street dogs from cruelty.

There are around 5 lakh stray dogs in Delhi, and MCD, in coordination with various NGOs, sterilises these stray canines.

Jasmine Dankewala, an advocate and a petitioner in the case, welcomed the verdict. Dankewala said the order meant protection for these

Feeders Attacked: High Court Protects, Delhi

The Indian Express – dated: 13/8/09

(Delhi/Mumbai/Kolkata/Ahmedabad/Chandigarh/Jammu/Lucknow/Nagpur/Pune/Vadodara/New York-weekly)

Dog lovers fear man-bite, move High Court for protection

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 12

A group of dog lovers in the Capital have moved court with a strange plea — save us from rabid neighbours; they beat us up if we feed strays.

The High Court heard seven petitions on Wednesday — each petitioner seeking protection from angry neighbours who assault them, or threaten to, when they care for street dogs.

Justice Rajiv Shakdher, who

heard the case, asked the Delhi government's counsel Meera Bhatia to file a response immediately on the security provided to animal welfare activists in the city.

One of the petitioners, Jasmine Damkewala from Freedom Fighter Enclave in Saket, complained of "repeated and continuous intimidation, abuse and threats, physical assault by residents of the locality with an intention to desist and obstruct her from tending to community dogs".

She blamed the local police of "apathy" in not investigating her

complaints about "imminent assault". The 33-year-old Damkewala also flaunted a Delhi High Court order issued on August 4, 2009, which directed the police to "protect" her while she cared for community dogs in her colony. She termed her ac-

tions as "legal, constitutional, humane and compassionate".

Another animal welfare organisation, Friendicose-Seca, has also approached the court against people who try to stop them from caring for strays. Its vice president

Dog lovers have said that neither the police nor the attackers know of a law, called the Stray Animal Control Rules (Dogs), 2001, meant to protect street dogs from cruelty

Geeta Sheshamani has faced opposition from her neighbours in Defence Colony.

The petitioners sought the court's intervention so that the state government would protect their "life and limb".

Dog lovers have said that neither the police nor the attackers know of a law, called the Stray Animal Control Rules (Dogs), 2001, meant to protect street dogs from cruelty.

A judgment on September 27, 2002 by a Bench led by the then Chief Justice of the High Court had

also advised the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Council to adopt a "scientific attitude" in dealing with dogs.

Meera Bhatia said: "The Bench had then said it was the court's 'dilemma' to strike a balance between ensuring respect for canines and taking care (so) that dogs do not endanger human lives."

The seven petitions were filed by dog carers from Defence Colony, Vasant Kunj, Saket, Mehrauli, Geeta Colony, Kalkaji and Kamla Nagar.

CRUEL DELHI

Attacked for caring, stray dog lovers move court

Harish V Nair

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NEW DELHI: It's not just stray dogs that bring out the mean streak in people. Dog lovers and animal rights activists are finding out that caring for strays in this city gets them the same treatment — they are shooed away, threatened and even beaten up.

On Wednesday, a bunch of female volunteers with non-governmental organizations (NGO) trooped into the Delhi High Court to complain that they were being "harassed"

and "physically assaulted" by locals while moving around immunizing and sterilizing stray dogs.

They came from Defence Colony, Vasant Kunj, Saket, Mehrauli, Geeta Colony, Kalkaji and Kamala Nagar.

There are an estimated 5 lakh (5,00,000) stray dogs in Delhi.

"Activists are being abused and threatened. Several complaints have been made to local police stations but they remain apathetic," said Sonia Ghosh, founder of the NGO Citizens for Welfare



ABHIMANYU

and Protection of Animals.

On their complaint, the court issued notices to the Delhi Police and to the director (veterinary), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

Meera Bhatia, counsel for the Delhi Police, was asked to contact the station house officers of the areas concerned and ensure no harm is done to the activists.

Bhatia had earlier argued that the police could do precious little as it was essentially the job of the MCD.

The NGOs work in coordination with the MCD to sterilize stray canines.

The high court had in an order in 2001 said strays should be treated with "compassion" and cruelty should be "avoided".

Court orders for Feeding Areas

You can pet a stray dog and feed it too

DOGGED PURSUIT Court orders creation of designated areas in all colonies for feeding and tending to stray dogs

Harish V Nair

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NEW DELHI: It's great news not only for the capital's stray canines but also for those who care for them. Till now, dog lovers were threatened and even beaten up by locals when they moved around feeding and sterilising the strays.

The Delhi High Court on Friday ordered creation of designated areas in all colonies of the capital for feeding and tending to stray dogs. There, the animal lovers will be provided protection, if they require it.

Justice VK Jain was hearing petitions seeking protection by animal welfare NGOs and dog lovers from Vasant Kunj, Defence Colony, Kalkaji, Neb Sarai, Saket, Geeta Colony and Nangloi.

These activists work with the MCD to sterilise stray canines, to control their population. As per the latest MCD survey, there are some 2.6 lakh stray canines in Delhi. Their density is nearly five per km and the sex ratio is 51:49 (1,34,000 male to 1,28,000 female dogs). However, only about half of them have been sterilised.

The activists contended before the court that feeding of dogs forms a necessary part of rabies control. "It is necessary

BITE THIS

2.6 lakh

The number of stray dogs in the city

5

Average number of stray dogs per sq km of area

50%

Ratio of sterilised dogs in Delhi

WHAT THE COURT HAS ORDERED

- Designated space for feeding stray dogs in seven colonies
- Model to be replicated across Delhi later
- Protection for dog lovers



- Activists say befriending stray dogs is a rabies control measure.

to confine dogs to their territories by befriending and partially domesticating through feeding them", said Sonia Ghosh, founder of the non-government organisation Citizens for Welfare and Protection of Animals.

Ghosh said the locals in various areas saw it as a nuisance and attacked them. Complaints

to the police often fell on deaf ears.

The court said, initially, the areas would be marked in the petitioners' colonies, and later replicated in other colonies.

Delhi Police counsel Meera Bhatia told the court, "We will ensure that there is no law and order problem in a particular area during the dog feeding."

The Times of India - dated:

19/12/09

(Delhi/Mumbai/ Kolkata and all India editions)

Earmark area for feeding strays: HC

TRAI NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Adopting an innovative approach to the proliferation of stray dogs and threat of rabies, the Delhi High Court on Friday came up with the idea of earmarking an area in each locality where people could feed those animals as that would in turn make it easier



CANINE CARE

for authorities to monitor their sterilization and vaccination.

On petitions filed by stray dog feeders from 10 localities, Justice V K Jain directed the Animal Welfare Board to identify such areas in those localities with MCD's within four weeks and report the same to the court in a week thereafter.

Since the provocation for the petitions was the harassment of stray dog feeders by other residents, Justice Jain made it clear that the feeding of those animals was both lawful and helpful.

This is because the Animal Welfare Board had agreed be-

fore the court that earmarking of areas for feeding stray dogs would not only avoid inconvenience to residents but also help implement the Municipal Animal Birth Control Programme which required all dogs to be sterilized and vaccinated locality-wise.

The counsel for Animal Welfare Board, Anjali Sharma, had commended stray dog feeders as their compassionate activity was a big help to the authorities in combating rabies. The message that came out from the case was that the threat of rabies would aggravate if the stray dogs were not befriended and partially domesticated.

The rationale behind the high court order is that if stray dogs in each locality get accustomed to gathering at one spot for food, it would help the authorities check their proliferation and the spread of rabies.

Justice Jain reiterated his earlier direction that none of the stray dog feeders who had moved the court, including a teacher, lawyer and doctor, should be subjected to any kind of harassment by other residents and the respective resident welfare associations.

In one particularly shocking incident, which took place ironically on October 2, advocate Jasmine Damkewala was assaulted and her car smashed by residents for feeding stray dogs in her neighbourhood.

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Court Protects, Outside Delhi

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Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Saturday, January 24, 2009



Top lawyers turn out in SC for Mumbai stray dogs

Satya Prakash
New Delhi, January 23

IT WAS one of those rare days in the Supreme Court. Country's legal luminaries on Friday teamed up to defend the right to life of Mumbai's stray dogs before the bench of Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan.

Fali Nariman may have refused to assist the Delhi High Court in the judges' assets case, but was there for the canine cause, appearing for the Animal Welfare Board.

And he was not alone. T.R. Andhyarujina, who represented Welfare of Stray Dogs, and Viniyog Parivar Trust counsel Raj Panjwani, too, joined him.

"A dog can not be exterminated because it barks," Nariman told the court.

"How an order could be

passed that stray dogs be exterminated?" Andhyarujina asked. There were more than six lakh dogs on Mumbai's streets and the authorities were planning to eliminate 5 lakh of them, he said.

To the bench's query that a stray dog could bite people, Nariman said such animals could be sterilised.

The arguments fetched the desired result as the SC stayed the Bombay HC's order allowing the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to kill stray dogs.

Several NGOs and the Animal Welfare Board challenged the December 19, 2008 HC judgment allowing killing of dogs creating nuisance. The HC based the order on Section 191-BA of the BMC Rules which gives the BMC commissioner the discretion to authorise catching

of a stray dog, in case of complaint. Such a dog can be kept in a kennel for three days, and if nobody turns up, it may be "destroyed".

The petitioners said the HC was wrong in allowing the killings as it gave discretion to the commissioner, which could be abused.

The petitioners said instead of the BMC rules, the animal birth control (dogs) rules, should be applied as it provided for a broad-based panel to decide the fate of stray dogs.

Killing of incurably ill, mortally wounded and rabid dogs is allowed. Mere barking is not considered a nuisance. The main controversy is about dogs, which don't fall in the said three categories but create nuisance by following vehicles or people.

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“A dog cannot be exterminated because it barks. It is inhuman to kill street dogs. They too have right to life...and there are other animal also on the streets.

The ability to procreate can be humanely targeted but killing is strictly prohibited.

—FALI S. NARIMAN

Killing of street dogs is no solution...sterilization should be the alternate method of controlling the number of dogs on streets

—K.G. BALAKRISHNAN,

24 1 2009

Dog lovers hail apex court order

HT Correspondent
Mumbai, January 24

ON FRIDAY morning, Mumbai sent frantic SMSes saying that the city's stray dogs have been saved. Everybody from celebrities to the urchin with a pet stray rejoiced at the stay.

"We are confident we will get a proper clarification of nuisance dogs from the Supreme Court," said Sudnya Pathkar, from In Defence of Animals, the NGO that moved apex court.

While they had no issues with the Bombay High Court order, they were unhappy with the BMC's description of nuisance dogs. "We understand the rationale behind the order, but were not too sure about what all falls in the category of nuisance dogs," added Pathkar.

Dog lovers across the city agreed that though the stay



Jiah Khan (right) and Anju Mahendru (third from right), at a rally in support of stray dogs on Thursday in Mumbai.

was not a final solution, it was a positive development.

TV director Durga Rai (40), from Andheri, who feeds 40 stray dogs every night, was delighted. "This planet belongs to everyone, not just humans. I hope that by celebrities lending their voice it has raised awareness

and encouraged more people to be compassionate towards stray dogs," she said.

Atul Shah of Vinayag Parivar Trust, which also filed the case, said: "Now justice will be done. These voiceless animals can't be mercilessly sacrificed."

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BMC chief writes back to Pam

Bhavika Jain
Mumbai, January 24

A WEEK after Hollywood actress Pamela Anderson wrote to Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Jai Raj Phatak, urging him not to kill stray dogs, and instead carry out their sterilisation effectively, Phatak replied to the letter. He said he was duty-bound to implement the law as interpreted by the courts.

Anderson had sent a letter to Pathak through the People for Ethical Treatment to Animals. Her letter followed an order by the high court over the killing of stray dogs. "In India, we implement the laws enacted by



JAI RAJ PHATAK
Municipal commissioner

the legislature as interpreted by the Indian courts. The Bombay High Court has given new interpretation of law," Phatak wrote.

Anderson's letter had said that she would, during her next visit to India, discuss the matter with the civic commissioner. To this, Phatak replied, "You are welcome to meet me during your next visit to India."



AP FILE PHOTO

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विधायक विजय मिश्र समेत 16 पर आरोप तय

इलाहाबाद | विधि संवाददाता

पूर्व मंत्री नंद गोपाल गुप्ता 'नंदी' के पर हुए जानलेवा हमले के मामले में कोर्ट ने सपा के चर्चित विधायक विजय मिश्र सहित 16 आरोपियों के खिलाफ हत्या, हत्या की कोशिश व दहशत फैलाने के अलावा रैगिस्टर में आरोप तय कर दिया।

सोशल जज विकार अहमद अंसारी ने आईपीसी की धारा 302 व 34 के तहत विजय मिश्र सहित 16 लोगों पर आरोप तय करते हुए कहा कि उन्होंने सामान्य आशय से बम ब्लास्ट किया जिससे राकेश मालवीय व विजय प्रताप सिंह की मौत हो गई। 12 जुलाई 2010 को सुबह 11 बजे बहादुरगंज में नंदगोपाल गुप्ता नंदी की गली में रिमोट से एक स्कूटी में ब्लास्ट किया गया।

नंदी पर हमले का मामला

विस्फोट से नंदी व कई अन्य घायल हो गए थे। आईपीसी की धारा 307 व 34 के तहत आरोप में कहा कि सामान्य आशय में किए ब्लास्ट से नंदगोपाल गुप्ता नंदी, संजय सिंह, विजय सिंह, राकेश मालवीय, प्रीतम व अनुज पांडेय को गंभीर चोटें पहुंचाईं। धारा 120बी व 302 के तहत आरोप में कहा कि हत्या के इरादे से साजिश करके बम ब्लास्ट किया है। कोर्ट ने आरोपों को पढ़कर सभी 16 आरोपियों को सुनाया तो राजेश पायलट के अलावा अन्य 15 ने इन सभी से इंकार कर दिया। राजेश पायलट ने एक आरोप के अलावा अन्य सभी आरोपों से इनकार किया। कोर्ट ने गवाही के लिए 20 दिसंबर की तारीख लगाई है।

विधायक पर कुत्ते को भी मार डालने का आरोप

नंदी पर हमले के मामले में विजय मिश्र सहित सभी 16 आरोपियों के खिलाफ विस्फोट में कुत्ता मार डालने का भी आरोप है। कहा गया है कि बम ब्लास्ट से कुत्ते को भी मार डाला गया।

कोर्ट ने आईपीसी की धारा 429 के तहत लगाए गए आरोप पर कहा कि बम ब्लास्ट के कारण एक कुत्ता मर गया है। यह दंडनीय अपराध है और अदालत के संज्ञान में है। आईपीसी की धारा 429 के तहत इस अपराध के लिए पांच वर्ष तक कैद और जुर्माने का भी प्रावधान है।

Newspaper Clippings

Colony Care Taker I Cards by Animal Welfare Board of India

<http://www.awbi.org/?q=node/152>

Now, ID cards to be issued for people who feed stray animals

Vijay Singh | TNN

Mumbai: There is finally some relief from local harassment for animal lovers who feed stray dogs and cats, as the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has decided to issue valid ID cards to animal feeders.

These new ID cards will now protect animal feeders, especially women and senior citizens, who have to face a lot of taunts, jibes and even physical abuse from animal-haters in their localities every day.

feeds stray dogs and cats, he has fractured his left arm.

Welcoming the AWBI plan of giving official cards, activist Poonam Mahajan of People For Animals (PFA) said: "Almost every day we receive complaints from various animal feeders how they are being humiliated, bullied or even beaten for their kind act of feeding stray animals. So, having this new license with them will safeguard them from such cruel and insensitive people."



The vice chairman of AWBI, Dr Chinny Krishna, explained: "This card is meant to protect genuine animal lovers who go out of their way to feed animals. Very often, stray-animal feeders are attacked, taken to police stations, threatened and harassed. Feeding stray animals is not illegal and in fact a Constitutional duty."

He added that citizens have full right to feed animals even without acquiring this license card.

Sr citizen attacked for feeding strays

Vijay Singh | TNN

Mumbai: An 84-year-old man fractured his left arm after he was beaten up for feeding stray dogs and cats in Colaba on Sunday evening.

"B V Narayan has been feeding stray animals near Electric House for years. He lives alone but loves animals. It is heartbreaking to know that a fused to lodge a police complaint."

Rashmi Majumdar, a Navi Mumbai MBA student, recalled how six goons had badly hit her and her cousin last June only because they were feeding a stray dog in Sanpada.

"The youths also hurled abuses at me and warned me not to feed dogs. After I lodged an FIR at Turbhe police station, that poor dog mysteriously disappeared from the locality. I fear the worst and pray for its soul," said Rashmi.

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People who care for street dogs will soon be getting government-issued identity cards. The new ID cards are expected to do away with harassment faced by many such persons from the general public, when they try to feed canines on the road. In a move that animal activists termed “unprecedented,” the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has decided last week that anyone who voluntarily cares for strays — dog feeders and colony caretakers who tend to animals in their locality. It Board has put up a one-page registration form (can be downloaded free of cost) on its website awbi.org, for those who want to get these ID cards. The applicant needs to fill in personal information such as name, address and experience, if any, of working with the Animal Welfare Board. Once the application is submitted, the ID card would be processed and mailed to the applicant within two weeks, board member and legal advisor Anjali Sharma said. “The card would have the person’s name and an attestation that he/she is doing a right and lawful deed and the Animal Welfare Board supports it. This lends credibility to the person,” Sharma said. The AWBI is a legal advisory body that was formed under the Animal Prevention Act of 1960 to protect the animals. Sharma explained that the goal of the card, which does not provide any exclusive rights, was solely the welfare of animals and caretakers. “Most people don’t realise that sterilisation and vaccination of stray dogs would be possible only through feeding and befriending dogs,” Sharma said. In December 2011, the Delhi High Court had passed an order voicing its approval for designated “dog feeding spots” for stray canines in the city. It passed the order on a petition which sought to protect dogs from “intimidating” residents, so they could be fed without any hassle. The court also ruled that police should assist dog feeders if they faced any “harassment” from residents and also ordered the AWBI to designate specific feeding areas.

Rishi Dev, founder of Citizens for Animal Rights who has written a book on “Urban disputes over animals”, said this was the first time that the government was supporting such an initiative. Sharma hoped that many would come forward to apply for the cards. “They are performing a duty,” she said. “And it’s a legitimate exercise.”

CANINE LOVE

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